

MEDIA KIT



This Summer Art Meets History in Two New Exhibitions at Tacoma Art Museum

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Media Release

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads
and *Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroad*

June 15, 2017

Media Contact: PublicRelations@TacomaArtMuseum.org

This Summer Art Meets History in Two New Exhibitions at Tacoma Art Museum

Tacoma, WA – This June, Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) opens two exhibitions inspired by the complex history of the transcontinental railroads in the West: ***Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads***, opening June 27, 2017 and ***Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads***, which opened June 3, 2017. Through two very different viewpoints the artworks in these exhibitions explore the impact of the western expansion of the railroads on individuals, notably the Chinese laborers who helped build them and an artist who helped shape their public image.

Internationally acclaimed artist Zhi LIN has refocused attention on the forgotten yet vital history of the 19th-century Chinese laborers in the western United States. Thousands of men migrated from China to seek fortunes in the gold mines of California but, instead, only found work building the transcontinental railroads. The first transcontinental railroad was constructed from 1863 to 1869 and was celebrated as a technical marvel because of its great length and the wide variety of terrain it crossed. The feat was successfully accomplished due largely to the contributions by Chinese men who did the back-breaking work of cutting through the mountains and across the deserts of the American West. They are rarely recognized in American history and this absence is an animating force in Lin's work.

Lin began exploring this history in 2006 creating a series of watercolor sketches of the landscape along the route of the first transcontinental railroad through California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. In 2013, he began to paint abstractions that marked the tragedies and casualties resulting from the dangerous work completed by Chinese migrants on the transcontinental railroad across the Sierra Nevada. *Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads* includes images from both these bodies of work, as well as new works specifically about the Chinese experience in Tacoma. Works on view will include ink paintings of realist scenes of historic importance and abstract paintings measuring more than 20 feet in length, and a monumental video and sound installation of the annual reenactment of the "marriage of the rails" at the Golden Spike National Historic Site near Promontory Summit, Utah.

Lin's paintings resonate in our region and nationally. Their content is amplified by the legacy of historical racism that was exacerbated by contentious labor relations during the construction of the railroads, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The federal act barred ethnic Chinese from

migrating to the United States. Such laws encouraged acts of violence and vigilantism against the Chinese migrants already living here, including the forced expulsion of Chinese people from Tacoma in 1885. The Act was not repealed until 1943.

Lin explains his intent, “In the midst of the current anti-immigrant environment, it is not very hard for anyone to imagine these tragic events. Yesterday’s Chinese migrants are today’s people from our southern border. I use the contradictions represented in the artwork to call to mind our responsibilities to history and to refute the ignorance and cruelty of our society and of ourselves.”

TAM’s Deputy Director and Chief Curator Rock Hushka adds, “Zhi Lin’s artworks highlight the rich and vital history of Chinese migrants and immigrants in the American West. We are grateful to Lin for his new research into the history of Chinese people in Tacoma. The exhibition offers an important context for us to share his perspective and an invaluable opportunity for us to discuss the legacy of our past through the work of a leading Northwest artist art.”

Lin studied printmaking at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. In 1989, he earned a Higher Diploma in Fine Art (equivalent to a master of fine arts degree in the US) from Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. In 1992, he also earned a master of fine arts degree from the University of Delaware. Today, Lin teaches painting at the University of Washington as the Floyd and Delores Jones Endowed Professor in the Arts. He has been awarded major grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, Lila Wallace–Reader’s Digest Artists at Giverny program, Art Matters Foundation Fellowship, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads is part of the museum’s *Northwest Perspective Series* of focus exhibitions on Northwest artists. It includes a fully-illustrated catalogue co-authored by Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Shawn Wong, and Rock Hushka. The exhibition is on extended view through February 18, 2018.

Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads focuses on the relationship of an individual artist with the railroad companies. Tacoma artist Abby Williams Hill (1861–1943) worked from 1903 to 1906 on paintings for two of the main western railroad companies, the Great Northern Railway and Northern Pacific Railway.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the railroads hired artists to create images of western landscapes and Native peoples to use in promotional campaigns encouraging railroad travel to the West for tourism or settlement. An avid traveler and outdoor enthusiast, Hill was excited by the unusual opportunity to spend extended time in some of the most scenic spots in the Northwest

camping and painting. She was one of the few women to secure such a commission and had to talk her way into her first assignment for the Great Northern Railway, but when she exhibited the resulting pictures, the Northern Pacific Railway was eager to hire her away for themselves.

Hill’s art background was eclectic, ranging from private study in Chicago and Europe to classes at the Art Students League in New York. Hill also was an activist who advocated for a variety of social, educational, and preservationist causes. When she and her husband moved to Tacoma in

1889, she was enraptured by the great beauty all around her. The railroad commissions offered a unique chance to pursue both her interest in landscape painting and in the natural beauty of the Northwest.

From May through mid-September of 1903 Hill made several extended trips into remote spots in the North Cascade mountains to create paintings for the Great Northern Railway. From 1904 to 1906, she received commissions from the Northern Pacific Railway to paint additional views around the Northwest and in Yellowstone National Park. Hill also considered these painting expeditions great educational opportunities and always took along several of her four children.

“These serene landscapes hide some fascinating history,” notes TAM curator Margaret Bullock. “Hill was painting these outdoors in all kinds of weather and sometimes from very precarious perches. In Yellowstone she could be surrounded by tourists or sitting just beyond the railroad tracks. But the paintings show only a remote unspoiled landscape.”

The histories of the American West and the railroads in the 19th and early 20th centuries are tightly intertwined. The railroads opened up the western states to new settlers, extensive resource extraction, and tourism. Abby Williams Hill was one of a number of artists hired to create images for their advertising. They carefully selected views that suggested the West was unspoiled, unclaimed, and uniquely exciting. Their colorful, widely circulated ads greatly influenced popular opinion about how its lands and resources should be used, often to the benefit of railroad companies.

For Hill, the railroad commissions had many important impacts on her life and career. She exchanged her work for railroad tickets so that she could further her children’s education and pursue her social causes and other interests. Through exhibitions and railroad advertising, her works were seen by a very broad national audience. And the commissions allowed Hill to fully explore her interest in landscape painting and communicate her love of nature.

This exhibition has been drawn from the Abby Williams Hill Collection at University of Puget Sound, Tacoma which holds a large collection of Hill’s artwork and her archives.

Funder credits:

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads is generously supported by Propel Insurance and the National Endowment for the Arts. Seasonal Support is provided by ArtsFund.

Support for the exhibition *Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads* is provided by Tacoma Arts Commission.

Press are invited for a press tour on Tuesday, June 27, 11 am
Tacoma Art Museum, 1701 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402

RSVP for press tour by emailing: PublicRelations@TacomaArtMuseum.org

Related Public Programs

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads and Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroad

Members' Exhibition Celebration

Saturday, July 29, 2017, 7 – 10 pm

Lunch and Learn with acclaimed author and

University of Washington Professor, Shawn Wong

Wednesday, August 2, noon – 1 pm

Q&A and art-making demonstration with Zhi LIN

November 16, Free Third Thursday, 5 – 8 pm

Community panel on immigration and exclusion

February 15, 2018, Free Third Thursday, 5 – 8 pm

Watch our calendar at TacomaArtMuseum.org/events for associated artist talks and programs.

About Tacoma Art Museum

Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in the city's downtown and a gathering space for connecting people through art. TAM's collection contains nearly 5,000 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader western region. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on continuous view; the most significant museum collection of jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast.

In 2014, TAM welcomed a gift of 295 works of western American art in the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub gift included \$20 million for new galleries and endowed funds. The Haub Family Galleries opened in 2014.

In January 2016, TAM announced the gift of the Benaroya Collection, including 225 works of art. The donation also includes nearly \$14 million in funding for new gallery space to showcase the collection and an endowment for a dedicated curator and care for the collection. The Benaroya wing is expected to open in early 2019.

HOURS Tuesdays–Sundays 10 am–5 pm,
 Third Thursdays 10 am–8 pm,
 Third Thursdays free from 5–8 pm.

ADMISSION Adult \$15,
 Student/Military/Senior (65+) \$13,
 Family \$40 (2 adults and up to 4 children under 18),
 Children 5 and under free. Members always free.

CONTACT 253-272-4258
 www.TacomaArtMuseum.org
 Info@TacomaArtMuseum.org

Available Images for Reproduction

Zhi LIN: *In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads*
and *Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroad*

Zhi LIN: *In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads*

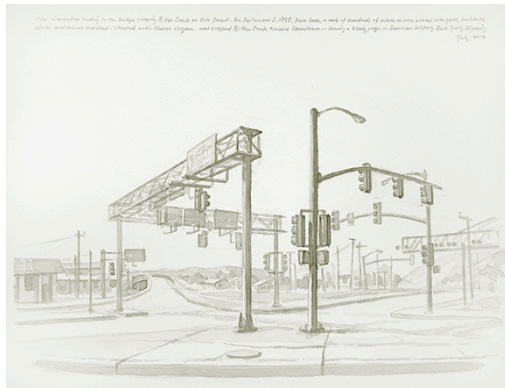
June 27, 2017 – February 18, 2018

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Contact: PublicRelations@TacomaArtMuseum.org or 253-272-4258 x3011

Credit Lines for Approved Press Images (list and paragraph format):



Zhi Lin

The Intersection before the Bridge Crossing Bitter Creek from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*

2007

Chinese ink on paper

8½ × 11 inches

On Loan from The AltaMed Art Collection, Courtesy of Cástulo de la Rocha and Zoila D. Escobar, AArC.12203

Zhi Lin, *The Intersection before the Bridge Crossing Bitter Creek* from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*, 2007. Chinese ink on paper, 8½ × 11 inches. On Loan from The AltaMed Art Collection, Courtesy of Cástulo de la Rocha and Zoila D. Escobar, AArC.12203.

Transcription on artwork: *The intersection leading to the bridge crossing Bitter Creek on Elk Street. On September 2, 1885, from here, a mob of hundreds of white miners armed with guns, hatchets, clubs, and knives marched, shouted anti-Chinese slogans, and crossed Bitter Creek toward Chinatown—leaving a bloody page in American history. Rock Springs, Wyoming. July, 2007*



Zhi Lin

Golden Spike Celebrations—Chinese Workers' Vantage Point of Andrew J. Russell's "Champagne Photo" Site

2008

Chinese ink on paper

51 × 97¼ inches

Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Golden Spike Celebrations—Chinese Workers' Vantage Point of Andrew J. Russell's "Champagne Photo" Site*, 2008. Chinese ink on paper, 51 × 97¼ inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.



Zhi Lin

Railway Tunnels on Donner Summit, California—A Rectification to Albert Bierstadt's "Donner Lake from the Summit" (1873)

2008/2015

Chinese ink on paper

50 × 100 inches

Collection of Brenda and Jeff Atkin

Zhi Lin, *Railway Tunnels on Donner Summit, California—A Rectification to Albert Bierstadt's "Donner Lake from the Summit" (1873)*, 2008/2015. Chinese ink on paper, 50 × 100 inches. Collection of Brenda and Jeff Atkin.



Zhi Lin
Green River from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*
 2011–12
 Chinese ink on paper
 8½ × 11 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Green River* from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*, 2011–12. Chinese ink on paper, 8½ × 11 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Transcription on artwork: *In the dark evening of September 2, 1885, over one hundred Chinese workers and their families were running past Green River. Due to the brutally cold weather and vicious wolves, many of them didn't live through the night. They were chased out of Rock Springs, where at least 28 Chinese were killed, 75 Chinese houses were burned down.*



Zhi Lin
"Chinaman's Chance" on Promontory Summit: Golden Spike Celebration, 12:30 pm, 10th May 1869
 2014

HD video projection and painted granite ballast with a surround sound environment

Dimensions variable

Video: 10:45 min.

Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *"Chinaman's Chance" on Promontory Summit: Golden Spike Celebration, 12:30 pm, 10th May 1869*, 2014. HD video projection and painted granite ballast with a surround sound environment, dimensions variable. Video: 10:45 min. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.



Zhi Lin

May Sky, Salt Lake, Utah, 1869, Building of the Central Pacific by Chinese Workers
2013

Chinese ink and colors on Chinese paper

38 x 139¾ inches

Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *May Sky, Salt Lake, Utah, 1869, Building of the Central Pacific by Chinese Workers*, 2013. Chinese ink and colors on Chinese paper, 38 x 139¾ inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.



Zhi Lin

Snowstorm on the Cascade Summit Switchback
2016

Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper

38 x 283 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Snowstorm on the Cascade Summit Switchback*, 2016. Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper, 38 x 283 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.



Zhi Lin
Sunset on Cascade
 2016
 Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper
 38 x 210 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

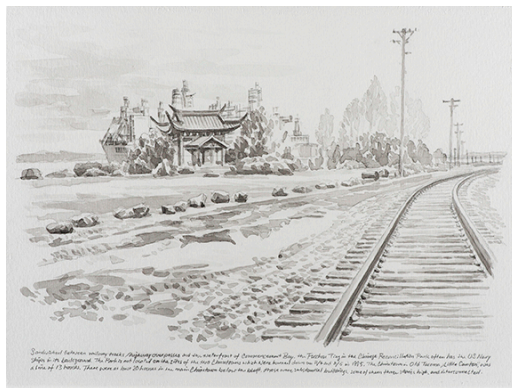
Zhi Lin, *Sunset on Cascade*, 2016. Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper. 38 x 210 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.



Zhi Lin
Alpha Opera House
 2017
 Chinese ink on paper
 8¾ x 12 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Alpha Opera House*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

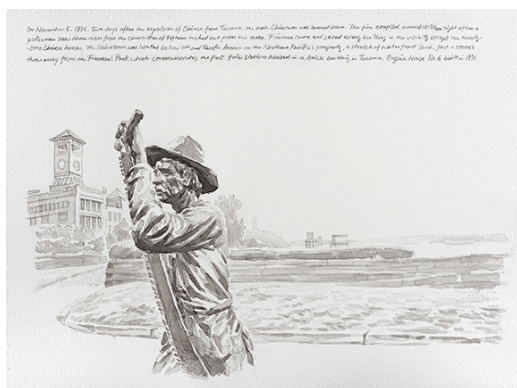
Transcription on artwork: *The Alpha Opera House was located at 1011 Pacific Avenue, currently is the address of the Bank of California building. From 1882 to 1890, the Opera House was home to the ultimate in refined entertainment in Tacoma. It hosted plays, operas, vaudeville, and town meetings. However, in 1885 many major anti-Chinese gatherings were held in and around the building. On Feb 21, in the Alpha they determined “Chinese Must Go!” On Nov. 13, 800 people made a torch-light parade and then crowded into the Alpha to welcome the 27 indicted leaders of Chinese Expulsion returning from Vancouver (WA): “heartfelt thanks to these brave and noble men . . .”*



Zhi Lin
Chinese Reconciliation Park
 2017
 Chinese ink on paper
 8¾ × 12 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Chinese Reconciliation Park*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ × 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Transcription on artwork: *Sandwiched between railway tracks/highway overpasses and the waterfront of Commencement Bay, the Fuzhou Ting in the Chinese Reconciliation Park often has the US Navy ships in its background. The Park is not located on the sites of the two Chinatowns which were burned down on 11/4 and 11/5 in 1885. The Chinatown in Old Tacoma, Little Canton, was a line of 13 houses. There were at least 20 houses in the main Chinatown below the bluff, these were substantial buildings, some of them three stories high, and interconnected.*



Zhi Lin
Fireman's Park
 2017
 Chinese ink on paper
 8¾ x 12 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Fireman's Park*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Transcription on artwork: *On November 5, 1885, two days after the expulsion of Chinese from Tacoma, the main Chinatown was burned down. The fire erupted around 10:30 am right after a policeman saw three men from the Committee of Fifteen rushed out from the area. Firemen came and saved every building in the vicinity except the twenty-some Chinese houses. The Chinatown was located below 7th and Pacific Avenue on the Northern Pacific's property, a stretch of waterfront land, just a stone's throw away from the Fireman's Park which commemorates the first fire station housed in a brick building in Tacoma, Engine House No. 6 built in 1891.*

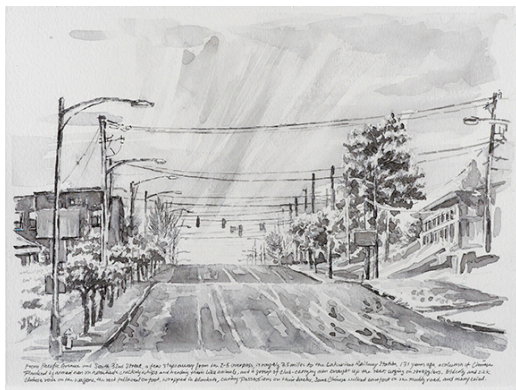


Zhi Lin
Lakeview Northern Pacific Railway Station
 2017

Chinese ink on paper
8¾ x 12 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *Lakeview Northern Pacific Railway Station*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

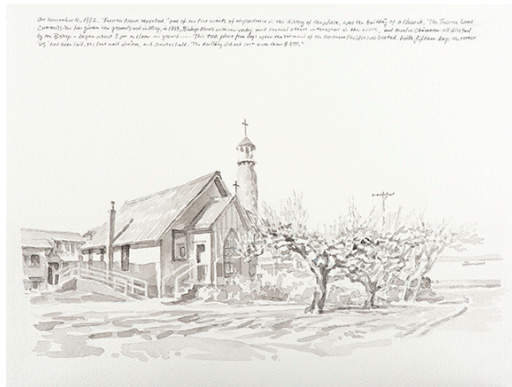
Transcription of artwork: *The Lakeview Railway Station was located north of the intersection of Lakeview Avenue SW and 108th Street SW. In the rainy and cold evening of November 3, 1885 around 9 pm, 197 Chinese reached the station guarded by 40 armed men on horseback. The Chinese were jammed into every possible space in the small station for shelter. The station master sold 77 tickets to the Chinese who could afford the train to Portland. Others were loaded on boxcars on a freight train next morning. However, for several days, woebegone Chinese could be seen walking south along the tracks. Among the Chinese, two elderly people died from exposure.*



Zhi Lin
On the Edge of the City
2017
Chinese ink on paper
8¾ x 12 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *On the Edge of the City*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Transcription of artwork: *From Pacific Avenue and South 32nd Street, a few steps away from the I-5 overpass, is roughly 7.5 miles to the Lakeview Railway Station. 131 years ago, a column of Chinese flanked by armed men on horseback cracking whips and herding them like animals, and a group of club-carrying men brought up the rear, urging on stragglers. Elderly and sick Chinese rode on the wagons, the rest followed on foot, wrapped in blankets, carrying possessions on their backs. Some Chinese walked barefoot on the muddy road, and many cried.*



Zhi Lin
St. Peter's Church
 2017
 Chinese ink on paper
 8¾ x 12 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle

Zhi Lin, *St. Peter's Church*, 2017. Chinese ink on paper, 8¾ x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Transcription of artwork: *On November 16, 1882, Tacoma News reported "one of the first events of importance in the history of the place, was the building of a church. The Tacoma Land Commission has given the ground; and in May, in 1873, Bishop Morris with the vestry and several others interested in the work, and twelve Chinamen—all directed by the Bishop—began about 2 pm to clear the ground. . . . This took place five days after the terminal of the Northern Pacific was located. Within fifteen days the corner 'log' had been laid, the last nail driven, and services held. The building did not cost more than \$500."*

Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads

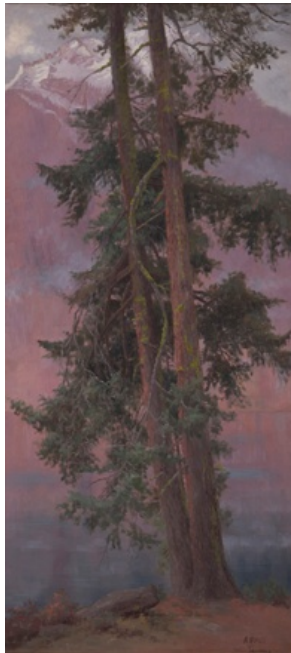
June 3 – October 15, 2017

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Contact: PublicRelations@TacomaArtMuseum.org or 253-272-4258 x3011

Credit Lines for Approved Press Images (list and paragraph format):



Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943)

Fir Trees, Lake Chelan, 1903

Oil on canvas

41 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Collection of University of Puget Sound

©University of Puget Sound

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943), *Fir Trees, Lake Chelan*, 1903. Oil on canvas. 41 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Collection of University of Puget Sound ©University of Puget Sound.



Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943)
Mount Rainier from Eunice Lake, 1904
 Oil on canvas, 27½ × 34⅝ inches
 Collection of University of Puget Sound
 ©University of Puget Sound

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943), *Mount Rainier from Eunice Lake*, 1904. Oil on canvas, 27½ × 34⅝ inches. Collection of University of Puget Sound ©University of Puget Sound.



Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943)
Grotto Geyser #1, 1906
 Oil on canvas, 17 × 22 inches
 Collection of University of Puget Sound
 ©University of Puget Sound

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861-1943), *Grotto Geyser #1*, 1906. Oil on canvas, 17 × 22 inches. Collection of University of Puget Sound ©University of Puget Sound.

Exhibition Label Text

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads

Introduction

In 2006, Zhi LIN began a series of paintings to explore the history of Chinese migrant laborers who constructed the transcontinental railroads. Lin seeks to reclaim this history and honor the sacrifices made by the thousands of Chinese men who labored on the largest engineering feat of the 19th century. Most of the Chinese migrants arrived in the United States from small villages in Guangdong Province seeking their fortunes on *Gum Sahn* (Gold Mountain) in California beginning in the 1850s. Laws were quickly enacted excluding Chinese from prospecting, leaving the migrants the hard labor of building railroads as their only employment. The rail companies found the workers to be inexpensive, dependable, and expert laborers. Chinese migrants made enormous sacrifices as they carved the rail lines through the mountains and deserts of California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and the Pacific Northwest.

For the works in this exhibition, Lin foregrounds the Chinese experiences at key sites such as Promontory Summit, Utah, where the “golden spike” finally completed the first transcontinental railroad in 1869; Rock Springs, Wyoming, where vigilantes massacred at least 28 men; and Tacoma, Washington, where Mayor Jacob Weisbach led the ethnic cleansing of 300 Chinese in 1885.

In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that prohibited any individual from China from immigrating to the United States. The ban was repealed in 1943 with the Magnuson Act, and the final restrictions limiting Chinese migration were lifted by the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. Given such sanction and animosity against Chinese migrants, it is not surprising that the history and contributions of the workers has been virtually ignored or forgotten.

Through his paintings, Lin imagines the hardships endured by the workers—the hard labor of blasting through the mountains, the searing heat or painful cold, and the ever-present threat of mortal danger. He believes his artworks will enhance our understanding of the migrant and immigrant experiences and the legacy of historic racial animosity in contemporary American society. Lin envisions deeper and richer conversations about migration and immigration guided by a shared knowledge of our histories.

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads is part of the *Northwest Perspective Series* at Tacoma Art Museum, highlighting the careers of significant Northwest artists. The exhibition was organized by Tacoma Art Museum and is generously supported by Propel Insurance and the National Endowment for the Arts. Seasonal support provided by ArtsFund.

Zhi LIN

Zhi LIN was born in Nanjing in 1959. His father was purged during the Cultural Revolution and sent to a labor camp in Anhui in eastern China, and the family eventually relocated to Shaoxing.

Lin was admitted to undergraduate studies in printmaking in 1978 at the prestigious China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He continued his postgraduate studies at the national Academy from 1985 to 1987. He earned his first Master of Fine Arts degree from Slade School of Fine Art in London in 1989 and then completed another master's degree at the University of Delaware in 1992. He currently holds the Floyd & Delores Jones Endowed Professorship in the Arts at the University of Washington in Seattle.

He has had three nationally traveling exhibitions, *Zhi LIN: Five Capital Executions in China*; *Zhi LIN: Crossing History/Crossing Cultures*; and *Invisible and Unwelcomed People* which was presented by the Kittredge Gallery at the University of Puget Sound. He also has had exhibitions at the Schneider Museum of Art at Southern Oregon University in Ashland and the 1st Hubei International Festival of Contemporary Art.

Lin's artworks have been included in many critically acclaimed group exhibitions, including *Outside In: Chinese x American x Contemporary Art* at Princeton University Art Museum, *The Other Side: Chinese and Mexican Immigration to America* at the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena and the Asia Society in Houston, *The Moment for Ink: Shaking Off Tradition* at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and *Tempus Fugit: Time Flies* at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. His works have also been included in a range of museum exhibitions including the National Fine Art Museum in Beijing, the Contemporary Arts Institute in London, and Tacoma Art Museum. His film collaboration *Chinese Ghost Story* with Dan Boord and Luis Valdovino was screened at "Documentary Fortnight, 2010" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

Lin has received prestigious grants from the Art Matters Foundation, Creative Capital Foundation, and two from the National Endowment for the Arts, among many others. His artwork has been collected by institutions in the United States, Great Britain, and China, notably the Princeton University Art Museum, the Frye Art Museum, the Oxford University Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archeology, the National Fine Art Museum in Beijing, and China Academy of Art in Hangzhou.

Watercolors

In 2001, Zhi LIN traveled through Green River, Wyoming on the way to his new home in Seattle. He was struck by the historical importance of this place:

Wow, this is the Union Pacific railway. As my trip continued through Utah, I realized that I was driving along the Central Pacific railway, built from west to east by Chinese workers, only I was traveling in the opposite direction.

He later recalled a book from his childhood about the Chinese experience in the United States that recounted the massacre of migrants near Rock Springs, Wyoming, among other violent episodes.

A few years later, Lin began traveling to many of the key sites related to the construction of the transcontinental railroad. He began a series of works titled *Invisible and Unwelcomed People* that documented these places that usually showed no trace of the Chinese contributions. Lin painted these landscapes in a style that recalled the on-site sketches of 19th-century explorer artists such as Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt. Starting from his style of the realism of the earlier artists, Lin then reversed the absence of the Chinese experience by adding notes about the historical Chinese migrants and immigrants.

Research-Based Practice

Zhi LIN strongly believes that history must be examined from different points of view, and most crucially from missing, marginalized, and suppressed points of view. He is guided by the philosopher Edith Wyschogrod who states, "A historian's responsibility is not merely as a memory bank but as binding oneself by a promise to the dead to tell the truth about the past."

Lin based his artworks on extensive historical research on the experiences of the Chinese migrants and immigrants. He faced the daunting challenge of recovering these histories that were either not recorded by the participants or deliberately excluded by white writers or officials. He collected hundreds of books and essays, ranging from the earliest accounts to cutting-edge research. He examined historical sources such as maps, business directories, insurance maps, court files, government papers, and newspaper stories and editorials. He poured over business records from the railroads. He sought expertise from other scholars such as photography historians, archeologists, and sociologists.

This deep knowledge he gleaned from his research informed how he approached each artwork. Lin explains:

How do I represent those people who would never be recorded by history, not in a written word or in visual materials? In the entire body of my work in the exhibition there is no single portrait of them. As a figurative painter, I like to paint people. However, in order to respect their individuality, and their lost identities, it would be a further erasure if I were to substitute them with an imagined portrait. In the end, I have tried to open up spaces for the audience in their individual bodies and imaginations to think and feel about the sorts of conditions (social and natural) that those workers' bodies would have encountered.

Video

On May 10, 1869, Andrew J. Russell photographed the iconic scene of the “marriage of the rails” commemorating the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah. Although there is historical record of the Chinese workers completing the work on that day, Russell took particular effort to remove any Chinese presence from his elaborately staged composition.

LIN draws attention to this historical omission by filming the annual reenactment of the “champagne moment” at Golden Spike National Historic Site from behind the central activities. His perspective, combined with careful selections of music and sound, emphasizes the absence of the Chinese who laid the final rails and were likely watching the celebration.

Lin explains:

I tried to envision myself as a worker who has been fired on the spot: “You’re done here, now you can leave.” I worked from the perspective of the one lingering around the site, excluded from the entire celebration. To observe the event from a different point of view is to reexamine the historical celebration. I want my audience, through my viewfinder, to look at the scene as though from a Chinese worker’s perspective, that is, excluded from the celebration, and watching the festivities from the back, and from the opposite side. This disrupts the privileged perspective of the dominant historical narrative, and presents the viewer with an alternative reading of the event.

A. J. Russell (1830–1902), *East Meets West at the Laying of the Last Rail*, 1869. Albumen print. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

A. J. Russell (1830–1902), photograph taken at Promontory Summit, Utah, May 10, 1869 (detail). Courtesy of *True West Archives*

Abstraction

Zhi LIN has employed a wide range of artistic styles to convey meaning throughout his career and particularly with his work on Chinese migrant workers. Here, Lin uses abstraction and its components of color, texture, and forms. He invites viewers to find multiple meanings in each work of art.

Deliberately avoiding details, Lin embraces abstraction as a tool to open awareness not only to the historical events but also to empathy. He explains:

My intent is for the audience to imagine themselves as the migrants on that day, to feel their way into the work. I want them to see not only the mountains and the snow, but also the workers and their gestures, their efforts. I hope that after viewing my work, when

people look at the trees, at the sky, and along the passage of the old grade, they will be able to see the presence of the workers, tracing back to the 19th century.

While abstract, Lin also incorporates references to railroad ties, fasteners for outer garments, atmospheric conditions, violent events targeting workers, geographic coordinates, and physical experiences.

Tacoma

Tacoma Art Museum partnered with Zhi LIN to make works of art that explored the expulsion of the Chinese migrants in Tacoma on November 3, 1885. Lin researched this history extensively. He describes his process:

I found a desperate telegram from the Chinese workers from Tacoma to the consulate in San Francisco. I read the indictment of the perpetrators of the ethnic cleansing. I tracked down the locations of stores and homes, the names of streets, and the buildings where the aggressors searched, pushed, chased, gathered, and marched some 200 Chinese out of town. We have each of the 27 leading perpetrators' names and their pictures, but we only have 127 Chinese names recorded in the prosecutor's letter to the grand jury, and we do not have any pictures of them.

Lin named the crime against the migrants, "Ethnic cleansing. Because leading out every single Chinese, '*cleaned*' them out of the city. People at that time even called for the *cleaning out of all Orientals*."

To understand the savagery of the crime, Lin visited Tacoma many times. He described his experience:

I walked part of the eight-mile journey the Chinese took to the rail station in Lakewood, from 17th Street and Broadway north to 7th Street, and then later south from 7th and Pacific Avenue where the Chinese were instructed to assemble. The walk led me to decide that in the sketches, I will draw from the middle of the street in downtown Tacoma, in order to simulate the first-person view: from the perspective of one of the Chinese in the column, flanked by the mob, pushed out from Tacoma. The viewpoint is a statement and the cornerstone of my work.

Exhibition Label Text

Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads

Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads

In the spring of 1903 an agent of the Great Northern Railway in Seattle took a chance. He awarded a contract to paint landscapes in the Pacific Northwest to Abby Williams Hill (1861–1943), one of the few women ever hired for such work by the railroads.

An avid traveler and outdoor enthusiast, Hill seized the chance to combine art and adventure. She and her physician husband had moved to Tacoma from Iowa in 1889, attracted to a boomtown with new opportunities and surrounded by spectacular scenery. Her art background was eclectic, ranging from private study in Chicago and Europe to classes at the Art Students League in New York. Hill also was an activist who advocated for a variety of social, educational, and preservationist causes.

Hill's works for the Great Northern Railway were used for promotional campaigns encouraging railroad travel to the West for tourism or settlement. From 1904 to 1906, she also worked for the Northern Pacific Railway, capturing additional views of the Northwest and Yellowstone National Park.

The railroads had dramatic impacts on the West. Tacoma's history in particular is intertwined with that of the Northern Pacific Railway. Images like Hill's landscapes were used to help the railroads secure business of all kinds. Hill's commissions offer a case study of the interplay of artists and industry in the development of the West and how those relationships can affect an artist's work and career.

Tacoma Art Museum gratefully acknowledges the collaborative support in the crafting of this exhibition from Laura Edgar and Peter Stanley of the Abby Williams Hill Collection, Professor Linda Williams and her students in Art History 380 and Professor Emeritus Ronald Fields, all from the University of Puget Sound.

Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads was organized by Tacoma Art Museum. Generous support for this exhibition provided by Tacoma Arts Commission.

The Railroad Commissions

The histories of the American West and the railroads in the 19th and early 20th centuries are tightly intertwined. The railroads opened up the western states to new settlers, extensive resource extraction, and tourism. Abby Williams Hill was one of a number of artists hired to create images for their advertising. The railroad companies carefully selected views that

suggested the West was unspoiled, unclaimed, and uniquely exciting. Their colorful, widely circulated ads greatly influenced popular opinion about how those lands and resources should be used, often to the benefit of railroad companies.

For Hill, the railroad commissions were transformative. She embraced the opportunity to camp for extended periods in remote areas and paint outdoors, perching on the edges of canyons or seated deep in forests. She exchanged her work for railroad tickets so that she could provide educational experiences for her children and pursue her other interests. Through exhibitions and railroad advertising, her works were seen by a very broad audience. Most importantly, the commissions allowed Hill to fully explore her interest in landscape painting and communicate her love of nature as an inspiration to others.

List of all Artwork in Exhibition, follows...

Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads and Promoting the West: Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads

***Zhi LIN: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants
and the Transcontinental Railroads***

June 27, 2017 through February 18, 2018

Height precedes width.

Except as noted below, works are courtesy of the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle.

Chinese Arch near Promontory from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2006

Chinese ink on paper

8 1/2 x 11 inches

Collection of Driek and Michael Zirinsky



An Old Horse Farm near Promontory from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2006

Chinese ink on paper

8 3/4 x 12 inches



A Scene off Highway 83 from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2006

Chinese ink on paper

8 3/4 x 12 inches

Collection of Christopher and Susan Ozubko



The Intersection before the Bridge Crossing Bitter Creek
from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*, 2007

Chinese ink on paper

8 1/2 x 11 inches

On Loan from The AltaMed Art Collection,

Courtesy of Cástulo de la Rocha and Zoila D. Escobar,
AARC.12203



19th Century Chinese Graves from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2007
 Chinese ink on paper
 8 1/2 x 11 inches
 Private collection



North Fork of American River from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2007
 Chinese ink on paper
 8 1/2 x 11 inches



Golden Spike Celebrations—Chinese Workers' Vantage Point
of Andrew J. Russell's "Champagne Photo" Site, 2008
 Chinese ink on paper
 51 x 97-1/4 inches



Railway Tunnels on Donner Summit, California—A
Rectification to Albert Bierstadt's "Donner Lake from
the Summit" (1873), 2008/2015
 Chinese ink on paper
 50 x 100 inches
 Collection of Brenda and Jeff Atkin



Green River from the series
Invisible and Unwelcomed People, 2011–12
 Chinese ink on paper
 8 1/2 x 11 inches



The Rock Springs School District's Baseball Field
 from the series *Invisible and Unwelcomed People*, 2011–12
 Chinese ink on paper
 8 1/2 x 11 inches



*May Sky, Salt Lake, Utah, 1869, Building of the
Central Pacific by Chinese Workers, 2013*
Chinese ink and colors on Chinese paper
38 x 139 ¾ inches



*"Chinaman's Chance" on Promontory Summit:
Golden Spike Celebration, 12:30 PM,
10th May 1869, 2014*
HD video projection and painted granite ballast
with a surround sound environment
Dimensions variable
Video: 10:45 min.



*Elev. 2,425 ft./39.6°N 120.6°W, Colfax, CA, 1866,
Building of the Central Pacific by Chinese
Workers, 2014*
Chinese ink and colors on Chinese paper
38 x 140 inches



Constellations over the Sierra Nevada, 2016
Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper
38 x 281 inches



Snowstorm on the Cascade Summit Switchback, 2016
Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper
38 x 283 inches



Sunset on Cascade, 2016

Mixed-media painting with woodblock printing with Chinese colors and inks on Chinese paper
38 x 210 inches



Alpha Opera House, 2017

Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



Chinese Reconciliation Park, 2017

Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



Fireman's Park, 2017

Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



Lakeview Northern Pacific Railway Station, 2017

Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



On the Edge of the City, 2017
Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



St. Peter's Church, 2017
Chinese ink on paper
8 ¾ x 12 inches



On November 3rd along Pacific Avenue in Tacoma, 2017
Hand scroll, Chinese ink and colors on Chinese paper
12 ½ x 396 inches

Abby Williams Hill and the Railroads

June 3, 2017 through October 15, 2017

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Lillian, 1886

Oil on canvas board

Stretcher: 16 3/4 x 12 in. (42.5 x 30.5 cm)

Frame: 20 1/4 x 15 1/2 x 1 3/4 in. (51.4 x 39.4 x 4.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-2



2

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Still Life with Wooden Shoes, 1900

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 13 1/2 x 18 1/4 in. (34.3 x 46.4 cm)

Frame: 18 5/8 x 23 1/2 x 1 1/2 in. (47.3 x 59.7 x 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-3



3

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Vashon Island, Puget Sound, 1900

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 19 1/2 x 11 3/4 in. (49.5 x 29.8 cm)

Frame: 24 x 16 x 1 5/8 in. (61 x 40.6 x 4.1 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-4



4

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Elderberry from Madrone, Dogwood, and Elderberry Screen, 1900

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 60 1/4 x 24 1/4 in. (153 x 61.6 cm)

Frame: 61 1/2 x 25 1/2 x 1 1/2 in. (156.2 x 64.8 x 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-1



5

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Abby Williams Hill's 1903 journal, 1903

Ink and pencil on paper in bound notebook

Overall (approximate): 5 x 3 x 1 1/2 in. (12.7 x 7.6 x 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-13-1



6

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Fir Trees, Lake Chelan, 1903

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 41 1/8 x 21 3/16 in. (104.5 x 53.8 cm)

Frame: 42 x 22 1/4 x 2 in. (106.7 x 56.5 x 5.1 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-5



7

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Gilbert Landre's Hotel, Sept 27th/'03, 1903

Pen and ink on paper

Sight: 8 1/2 x 7 in. (21.6 x 17.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-6



8

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Mts about Field's Hotel/Stehekin, Wash. June/'03, 1903

Graphite on paper

Sight: 8 1/4 x 6 1/2 in. (21 x 16.5 cm)

Frame: 16 1/2 x 14 in. (41.9 x 35.6 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-7



9

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Glacier Peaks During Storm, 1903

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 25 1/4 x 38 in. (64.1 x 96.5 cm)

Frame: 30 3/4 x 43 1/2 x 2 in. (78.1 x 110.5 x 5.1 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-8



10

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Horseshoe Basin, Afternoon, 1903

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 38 × 25 in. (96.5 × 63.5 cm)

Frame: 43 1/2 × 30 1/2 × 1 3/4 in. (110.5 × 77.5 × 4.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-9



11

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Mount Booker near Lake Chelan, 1903

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 42 × 29 in. (106.7 × 73.7 cm)

Frame: 45 1/2 × 32 3/8 × 1 1/2 in. (115.6 × 82.2 × 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-10



12

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Sunset Falls, 1903

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 29 × 42 in. (73.7 × 106.7 cm)

Frame: 33 × 46 × 1 1/2 in. (83.8 × 116.8 × 3.8 cm)

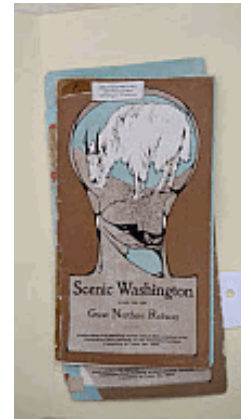
Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-11



13

Great Northern Railway

Scenic Washington pamphlet, Great Northern Railroad, 1903-1904
 Ink on paper, bound pamphlet
 Overall (approximate dims. closed): 7 1/2 x 4 in. (19.1 x 10.2 cm)
 Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-13-2



14

Great Northern Railway

Scenic Washington pamphlet, Great Northern Railroad, 1903-1904
 Ink on paper, bound pamphlet
 Overall (approximate dims. closed): 7 1/2 x 4 in. (19.1 x 10.2 cm)
 Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-13-3



15

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Mount Rainier from Eunice Lake, 1904
 Oil on canvas
 Stretcher: 27 1/2 x 34 5/8 in. (69.9 x 87.9 cm)
 Frame: 32 x 39 1/4 x 2 in. (81.3 x 99.7 x 5.1 cm)
 Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-12



16

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Clark Fork of the Columbia River, near Eddy, Montana, 1904

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 28 x 41 in. (71.1 x 104.1 cm)

Frame: 36 1/4 x 49 x 1 3/4 in. (92.1 x 124.5 x 4.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-13



17

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Northern Pacific Yellowstone Park Line, 1905

Pen and ink with washes on paper

Paper size: 12 1/4 x 7 3/4 in. (31.1 x 19.7 cm)

Frame: 19 x 14 1/2 in. (48.3 x 36.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-14



18

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Yellowstone Canyon, 1905

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 28 x 38 in. (71.1 x 96.5 cm)

Frame: 33 1/2 x 43 1/2 x 2 1/8 in. (85.1 x 110.5 x 5.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-15



19

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Yellowstone Falls (from below), 1905

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 37 1/2 x 28 in. (95.3 x 71.1 cm)

Frame: 43 1/2 x 33 1/4 x 2 in. (110.5 x 84.5 x 5.1 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-16



20

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Chief Charlo, 1905

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 31 x 20 in. (78.7 x 50.8 cm)

Frame: 34 7/8 x 24 x 1 5/8 in. (88.6 x 61 x 4.1 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-21



21

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Flathead Indian Reservation, Looking East from Ronan, Montana, 1906

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 16 x 25 5/8 in. (40.6 x 65.1 cm)

Frame: 19 5/8 x 29 1/4 x 1 1/2 in. (49.8 x 74.3 x 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-22



22

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Emerald Pool, 1906

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 17 × 22 in. (43.2 × 55.9 cm)

Frame: 21 5/8 × 26 3/4 × 2 11/16 in. (54.9 × 67.9 × 6.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-17



23

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Geyser, 1906

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 17 × 22 in. (43.2 × 55.9 cm)

Frame: 21 3/4 × 26 3/4 × 2 1/8 in. (55.2 × 67.9 × 5.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-18



24

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Grotto Geyser #1, 1906

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 22 × 17 in. (55.9 × 43.2 cm)

Frame: 26 3/4 × 21 1/2 × 3 1/4 in. (67.9 × 54.6 × 8.3 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-19



25

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Vermillion Cliffs, Hell Gate Canyon, 1906

Oil on canvas

Stretcher: 38 × 28 in. (96.5 × 71.1 cm)

Frame: 41 3/4 × 31 3/4 × 1 1/2 in. (106 × 80.6 × 3.8 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-12-20



26

Abby Williams Hill (American, 1861 - 1943)

Abby Williams Hill's paint box and palette, not dated

Metal box, wooden palette, paints, brushes

Overall (closed): 2 1/2 × 13 × 9 in. (6.4 × 33 × 22.9 cm)

Overall (open): 2 1/2 × 25 3/4 × 18 1/4 in. (6.4 × 65.4 × 46.4 cm)

Collection of University of Puget Sound, T2017-13-4

